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IOWA SAT SCORES REMAIN STRONG ***Student participation and scores in Advanced Placement improve***

(DES MOINES, IOWA) – AUGUST 29, 2005 – Iowa's 2005 high school graduates continued the state's trend of achieving top scores in the nation on the SAT college entrance exam, and more high school students across the state are taking Advanced Placement courses, according to the 2005 summary report from The College Board, which administers both the SAT and AP programs.

Iowa SAT scores improved over last year, with an average verbal score of 596 and average math score of 608, compared to 593 and 602, respectively, last year. The 2005 national average verbal score was 508 and average math score was 520. The highest possible score is 800 in each category.

State SAT participation remained low at about 1,670 students (about 5 percent of graduates) compared to the 66 percent of Iowa graduates who take the ACT college prep exam. That means the SAT results are not a significant indicator of overall or average student achievement, said Judy Jeffrey, director of the Iowa Department of Education. "The SAT simply is not as popular among most students in the Midwest," she said. "However, the Iowa students who do take the SAT exam generally do outscore other students nationwide."

The more relevant information for Iowa from the College Board report relates to the continued increases in the number of schools offering Advanced Placement (AP) courses, the number of students who take the courses, and those who choose to take the AP exams, Jeffrey said. The College Board AP courses are college-level studies available to high school students, most often in their junior or senior years. Students choose among 34 classes in 19 subject areas, with an optional final exam at the completion of the course. Most colleges grant credit or advanced placement to students with high AP exam scores.

"We are encouraged that more high schools recognize the importance of including AP in their course offerings, and that students see the added value of more rigorous classes," Jeffrey said.

Iowa's 2004-05 AP highlights from all schools include:

- ❑ 6,047 students took at least one AP exam, up from 5,425 last year. (Exams are not required, but students who do take the exams and score 3 or higher typically are able to garner college credit for the course).

– MORE –

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- ❑ 67.2 percent of 8,986 test takers scored 3 or higher (69.2 percent scored 3 or higher last year); 5 is the highest possible score; nationally, 59.6 percent of students scored 3 or higher.

Jeffrey said AP participation rates and test taking has increased steadily since the inception of the Iowa Online AP Academy (IOAPA), which provides AP courses to accredited public and private schools over the Internet or ICN. The Iowa Online AP Academy was developed in the Fall of 2001 by the [Belin-Blank International Center for Gifted Education](#) at the University of Iowa, in cooperation with the Iowa Department of Education, and is federally funded through a congressionally earmarked grant.

Through May 2005, 300 accredited Iowa high schools registered with the [Iowa Online AP Academy](#), representing all 12 Area Education Agencies and 95 counties. About 95 percent are rural or small schools, according to IOAPA. During the 2004-05 school year, about 1,225 accredited public and private school students have taken one of the 15 online or ICN courses, and more than 2,000 have used other AP materials and processes provided by the academy.

The Iowa Online AP Academy offers tuition grants to teachers who attend the Advanced Placement Teacher Training Institute conducted at the University of Iowa. The grants have supported nearly 500 Iowa teachers over the past four years.

"The Online AP Academy has made it possible for students from diverse settings to have access to the best courses and instructors trained in teaching Advanced Placement classes," said Jeffrey.

For more information:

- ❑ Iowa's overall achievements: www.state.ia.us/educate.
- ❑ IOAPA: www.uiowa.edu/~belinctr/ or www.iowaAPacademy.org/.

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